1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

tural relations are strongest between adjacent tribes, but a common social structure embraces the whole of Nuerland; and (3) the social sphere of an individual, being his circuit of social contacts of one kind or another with other Nuer.

VIII

The political structure of the Nuer can only be understood in relation to their neighbours, with whom they form a single political system. Contiguous Dinka and Nuer tribes are segments within a common structure as much as are segments of the same Nuer tribe. Their social relationship is one of hostility and its expression is in warfare.

The Dinka people are the immemorial enemies of the Nuer. They are alike in their oecologies, cultures, and social systems, so that individuals belonging to the one people are easily assimilated to the other; and when the balanced opposition between a Nuer political segment and a Dinka political segment changes into a relationship in which the Nuer segment becomes entirely dominant, fusion and not a class structure results.

As far as history and tradition go back, and in the vistas of myth beyond their farthest reach, there has been enmity between the two peoples. Almost always the Nuer have been the aggressors, and raiding of the Dinka is conceived by them to be a normal state of affairs and a duty, for they have a myth, like that of Esau and Jacob, which explains it and justifies it. Nuer and Dinka are represented in this myth as two sons of God who promised his old cow to Dinka and its young calf to Nuer Dinka came by night to God's byre and, imitating the voice of Nuer, obtained the calf. When God found that he had been tricked he was angry and charged Nuer to avenge the injury by raiding Dinka's cattle to the end of time. This story, familiar to every Nuer, is not only a reflection of the political relations between the two peoples but is also a commentary on their characters. Nuer raid for cattle and seize them openly and by force of arms. Dinka steal them or take them by treachery. All Nuer regard them—and rightly so—as thieves, and even the Dinka seem to admit the reproach, if we attribute correct significance to the statement made to Mr. K. C. P. Struvé in 1907 by the Dinka keeper of the shrine of Deng dit at Luang Deng.

1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

648 After recounting the myth of the cow and calf, he added, 'And to this day the Dinka has always lived by robbery, and the Nuer by war.'[1]

721 Fighting, like cattle husbandry, is one of the chief activities and dominant interests of all Nuer men, and raiding Dinka for cattle is one of their principal pastimes. Indeed *jaang*, Dinka, is sometimes used to refer to any tribe whom the Nuer habitually raid and from whom they take captives. Boys look forward to the day when they will be able to accompany their elders on these raids against the Dinka, and as soon as youths have been initiated into manhood they begin to plan an attack to enrich themselves and to establish their reputation as warriors. Every Nuer tribe raided Dinka at least every two or three years, and some part of Dinkaland must have been raided annually. Nuer have a proper contempt for Dinka and are derisive of their fighting qualities, saying that they show as little skill as courage. *Kur jaang*, fighting with Dinka, is considered so trifling a test of valour that it is not thought necessary to bear shields on a raid or to pay any regard to adverse odds, and is contrasted with the dangers of *kur Nath*, fighting between Nuer themselves. These boasts are justified both in the unflinching bravery of the Nuer and by their military success.

727 The earliest travellers record that Nuer held both banks of the Nile, but it is probable that the entire Zeraf Island was at one time occupied by Dinka and it is certain that the whole of the country from the Zeraf to the Pibor and, to the north of the Sobat, from the confines of Shillukland to the Ethiopian scarp was, with the exception of riverain settlements of Anuak, still in their hands as late as the middle of last century, when it was seized by the Nuer in two lines of expansion, to the north of the Sobat and to the south of it. This is known from the statements of both Nuer and Dinka, the evidence of genealogies and age-sets, and the records of travellers, who frequently refer to the struggle between the two peoples, the dominant position of the Nuer among their neighbours, the awe they inspired in them, and their bravery and chivalry.[2] The conquest, which seems to have resulted in absorp-

[1] *Sudan Intelligence Report*, no. 152, 1907.

[2] Werne, op. cit., p. 163; Abd-el-Hamid, op. cit., pp. 82–3; Philippe Terrenuova D'Antonio, 'Relation d'un voyage au Fleuve Blanc', *Nouvelles annales des voyages*, Paris, 1859. Lejean, op. cit., p. 232; Poncet, op. cit., pp. 18, 26, 36, 41–2, and 44; Petherick, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 6; Heuglin, *Reise in das Gebiet*

1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

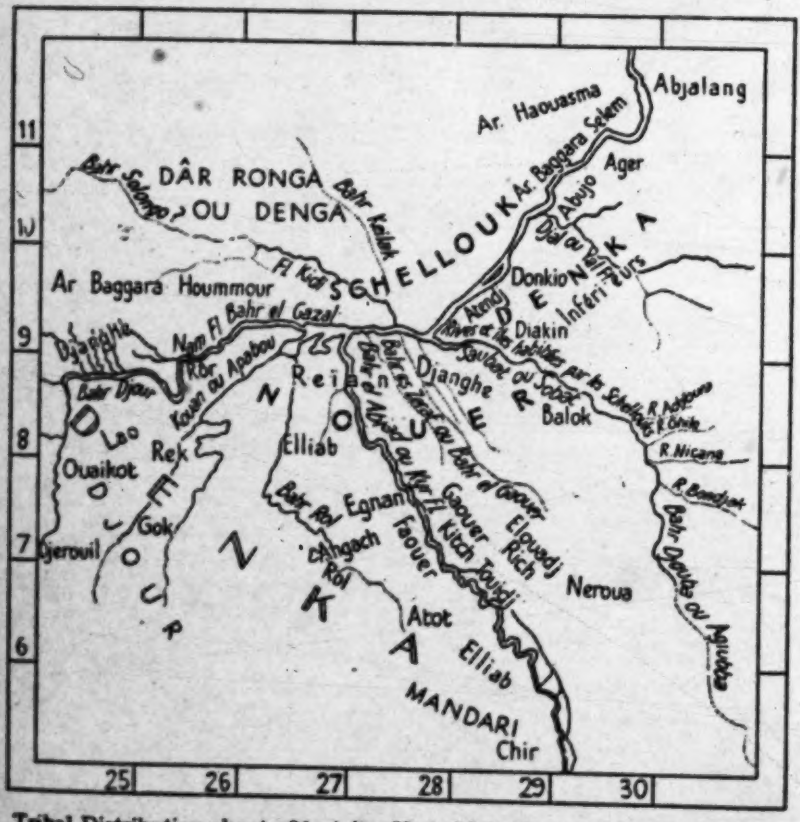
tion and miscegenation rather than extermination, was so rapid and successful that the whole of this vast area is to-day occupied by Nuer, except for a few pockets of Dinka on the Sobat, Filus, and Atar. Apart from these independent units there are many local communities in Eastern Nuerland of Nuer who acknowledge that they are of Dinka descent, and small lineages of Dinka origin are found in every village and camp. Some Dinka tribes took refuge with compatriots to the south, where the Gaawar and Lou continued to raid them. The Western Nuer likewise persistently raided all the Dinka tribes that border them, particularly those to the south and west, obtained a moral ascendency over them, and compelled them to withdraw farther and farther from their boundaries. To the west of the Nile, as to the east, Dinka captives were assimilated, and there are many small lineages of Dinka descent in every tribe and these are often preponderant in local communities. Of all the Dinka only the Ngok, to the south of the Sobat, were left in peace, probably on account of their poverty of stock and grazing, though their immunity has a mythological sanction. It seems also that the Atwot were not considered such legitimate prey as the Dinka on account of their Nuer origin, and it is probable that they were seldom molested as they are remotely situated.

The favourite season for raiding Dinka was at the end of the rains, though they were also invaded at their commencement. Leek tribesmen told me that when they raided Dinka to the south-west they used to sleep the first night near the villages of the Wot tribe and the second night in the bush. They took no food with them and ate only what fish they might hastily spear on the way, travelling with all speed throughout the day and part of the night. On the third day they attacked the Dinka villages or camps at dawn. The Dinka seldom put up any resistance, but loosened their cattle and tried to drive them away. No one seized cattle till the enemy had been dispersed. Then each took what prizes he could, often not troubling to tether his captures but slashing their rumps in sign of ownership. Afterwards the beasts were tied up

des Weissen Nil und seiner westlichen Zuflüsse in den Jahren 1862–1864, 1869, p. 104. Georg Schweinfurth, *The Heart of Africa* (English translation), 1873, vol. i, pp. 118–19; Gaetano Casati, *Ten Years in Equatoria and the Return with Emin Pasha* (English translation), 1891, vol. i, p. 39; Romolo Gessi Pasha, *Seven Years in the Soudan* (English translation), 1892, p. 57. The maps intended by travellers to show the positions of the peoples of this area are rather vague and are not in entire agreement. The reader may consult those in Marno, op. cit., Poncet, op. cit., Heuglin, op. cit., the map compiled by Lejean from information supplied by the Poncet brothers in *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris), 1860; the maps prepared by V. A. Malte-Brun in *Nouvelles annales des voyages*, 1855 and 1863, and others of this period.

1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

bodies were thrown on the flaming byres and huts. Captives were placed in the centre of the camp, the women being sometimes bound at night to render them more secure. Sexual intercourse is taboo on a raid. Nor may Nuer eat with a captive. A boy captive may not even draw water for them to drink. Only when



Tribal Distribution about 1860 (after V. A. Malte-Brun, *Nouvelles annales des voyages*, 1863).

an ox has been sacrificed in honour of the ghosts, after the return home, and they have been informed that strangers have entered their homesteads, may Nuer have sexual relations with captives or eat with them.

In the following section we describe other foreign contacts, but till European conquest the only foreign relations which may be said to have been expressed in constant warfare were those with the various Dinka tribes which border Nuerland.

1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

648 We have not enumerated them, for their names are irrelevant. The fighting between the two peoples has been incessant from time immemorial and seems to have reached a state of equilibrium before European conquest upset it. (Malte-Brun's map compared with modern maps suggests that tribal positions have not greatly altered since 1860.) In the earlier part of the historic period, from about 1840 to near the end of the century, Nuer appear to have been expanding in search of new grazing, but continued raiding for cattle, an aggressive action which we attribute to the structural relations between the two peoples, but which was, no doubt, intensified by rinderpest.

Though Dinka relations with Nuer are extremely hostile and war between them may be called an established institution, they have, nevertheless, united occasionally to make war against the Egyptian Government and there have sometimes been joint social gatherings. In times of famine Dinka have often come to reside in Nuerland and have been readily accepted and incorporated into Nuer tribes. In times of peace, also, Dinka visited their relations who had been captured or who had settled in Nuerland, and, as remarked earlier, there seems in parts to have been some trade between the two peoples. The strands of social relationships of a general kind, which are often numerous across the boundaries of adjacent Nuer tribes and which stretch across Nuerland, are thus prolonged weakly beyond the limits of Nuerland in occasional and hazardous contacts with foreigners.

648 829 All Dinka come into the category of *Jaang*, and Nuer feel that category to be nearer to themselves than other categories of foreigners. These foreign peoples, with all of whom the Nuer have reached a state of balanced hostility, an equilibrium of opposition, expressed occasionally in fighting, are, with the exception of the Beir, generally classed as *Bar*, cattleless people or people possessing very few cattle. A further category are the *Jur*, cattleless people whom the Nuer regard as lying on the periphery of their world, such as the Bongo-Mittu group of peoples, the Azande, the Arabs, and ourselves. However, they have separate names for most of these peoples.

648 171 We have remarked that Nuer feel Dinka to be nearer to themselves than other foreigners, and in this connexion we draw

1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

attention to the fact that Nuer show greater hostility towards, and more persistently attack, the Dinka, who are in every respect most akin to themselves, than any other foreign people. This is undoubtedly due, in some degree, to the ease with which they can pillage the vast Dinka herds. It may also, in part, be attributed to the fact that of all neighbouring areas Dinkaland alone opposes no serious oecological handicaps to a pastoral people. But it may be suggested further that the kind of warfare that exists between Nuer and Dinka, taking into consideration also the assimilation of captives and the intermittent social relations between the two peoples between raids, would seem to require recognition of cultural affinity and of like values. War between Dinka and Nuer is not merely a clash of interests, but is also a structural relationship between the two peoples, and such a relationship requires a certain acknowledgement on both sides that each to some extent partakes of the feelings and habits of the other. We are led by this reflection to note that political relations are profoundly influenced by the degree of cultural differentiation that exists between the Nuer and their neighbours. The nearer people are to the Nuer in mode of livelihood, language, and customs, the more intimately the Nuer regard them, the more easily they enter into relations of hostility with them, and the more easily they fuse with them. Cultural differentiation is strongly influenced by oecological divergences, particularly by the degree to which neighbouring peoples are pastoral, which depends on their soils, water-supplies, insect life, and so forth. But it is also to a considerable extent independent of oecological circumstances, being autonomous and historical. The cultural similarity of Dinka and Nuer may be held largely to determine their structural relations; as, also, the relations between the Nuer and other peoples are largely determined by their increasing cultural dissimilarity. The cultural cleavage is least between Nuer and Dinka; it widens between Nuer and the Shilluk-speaking peoples; and is broadest between the Nuer and such folk as the Koma, Burun, and Bongo-Mittu peoples.

Nuer make war against a people who have a culture like their own rather than among themselves or against peoples with cultures very different from their own. The relations between

1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

social structure and culture are obscure, but it may well be that had the Nuer not been able to expand at the expense of the Dinka, and to raid them, they would have been more antagonistic to people of their own breed and the structural changes which would have resulted would have led to greater cultural heterogeneity in Nuerland than at present exists. This may be an idle speculation, but we can at least say that the vicinity of a people like themselves who possess rich herds that can be plundered may be supposed to have had the effect of directing the aggressive impulses of Nuer away from their fellow-countrymen. The predatory tendencies, which Nuer share with other nomads, find an easy outlet against the Dinka, and this may account not only for the few wars between Nuer tribes but also, in consequence, be one of the explanations of the remarkable size of many Nuer tribes, for they could not maintain what unity they have were their sections raiding one another with the persistence with which they attack the Dinka.

IX

Nuer had little contact with the Shilluk, a buffer of Dinka dividing them in most places, and where they have a common border, warfare seems to have been restricted to incidents involving only frontier camps. The powerful Shilluk kingdom, well organized and comprising over a hundred thousand souls, could not have been raided with the same impunity as the Dinka tribes, but the characteristic reason Nuer give for not attacking them is otherwise: 'They have no cattle. The Nuer only raid people who possess cattle. If they had cattle we would raid them and take their cattle, for they do not know how to fight as we fight.' There is no actual or mythological enmity between the two peoples.

The Anuak, who also belong to the Shilluk-Luo group, border the Nuer to the south-east. Though they are almost entirely horticultural to-day, they possessed herds in the past and in Nuer opinion their country has better grazing than Shillukland. It was overrun by the Nuer over half a century ago as far as the foothills of the Ethiopian scarp, but was quickly abandoned, probably because of tsetse, for the Anuak put up little resistance. Nuer continued to raid them up to thirty years ago, when they obtained rifles from Abyssinia and were better able to resist and even to take the offensive. In spite of two reverses they finally succeeded in penetrating Lou country, where they inflicted heavy casualties

1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

and captured many children and cattle, a feat which brought the Government down the Pibor, thereby closing hostilities. Many evidences show that at one time the Anuak extended far westward of their present distribution and were displaced from these sites, or assimilated, by the Nuer.

The other peoples with whom Nuer come into contact may be mentioned very briefly as their interrelations have little political importance. Another south-eastern neighbour is the Beir (Murle) people. As far as I am aware the Nuer did not raid them often and those few who know something of them respect them as devoted herdsmen. To the north-east of Nuerland the Gaajak have for several decades had relations with the Galla of Ethiopia. These appear to have been peaceful and there was a certain amount of trade between the two peoples. Absence of friction may be attributed largely to the corridor of death that divides them, for when the Galla descend from their plateau they quickly succomb to malaria while any attempt on the part of the Nuer to move eastwards is defeated by the tsetse belt that runs along the foot-hills. The Gaajak raided the Burun and Koma (both often referred to vaguely as 'Burun') for captives, and they were too small in numbers and too unorganized to resist or retaliate. To the north-west the Jikany, Leek, and Bul tribes occasionally raided the Arabs and the communities of the Nuba Mountains; and, to judge from a statement by Jules Poncet, the trouble over water and grazing in the dry season that occurs to-day between Nuer and Arabs has long occurred.[1]

The Arab slavers and ivory traders, who caused so much misery and destruction among the peoples of the Southern Sudan after the conquest of the Northern Sudan by Muhammad Ali in 1821, very little inconvenienced the Nuer. They sometimes pillaged riverside villages, but I know of no record of their having penetrated far inland, and it was only the more accessible sections of the Zeraf River tribes that appear to have suffered to any extent from their depredations. I do not believe that anywhere were the Nuer deeply affected by Arab contact.[2] The Egyptian Government and, later, the Mahdist Government, which were supposed to be in control of the Sudan from 1821 to the end of the century, in no way administered the Nuer or exercised control over them from the riverside posts they established on the fringes of their country.

[1] Poncet, op. cit., p. 25.

[2] I find myself unable to accept Casati's statement of the position (op. cit., vol. i, p. 38), but consider that greater reliance should be placed on the opinion of other authorities. See Romolo Gessi's letter to the Editor of *Esploratore* in 1880 (op. cit., p. xx), and Lejean's report from Khartoum in 1860 (op. cit., p. 215).

1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

648

The Nuer sometimes raided these posts and were sometimes raided from them,[1] but on the whole it may be said that they pursued their lives in disregard of them.

This disregard continued after the reconquest of the Sudan by Anglo-Egyptian forces and the establishment of the new administration. The Nuer were the last important people to be brought under control and the administration of their country cannot be said to have been very effective till 1928, before which year government consisted of occasional patrols which only succeeded in alienating them further. The nature of the country rendered communications difficult and prevented the establishment of posts in Nuerland itself, and the Nuer showed no desire to make contact with those on its periphery. Little control was exercised and it was impossible to enforce decisions.[2] A further difficulty was the absence of Nuer who had travelled in foreign parts and spoke Arabic, for their place was usually taken, as interpreters and in other capacities, by Dinka and Anuak, who were distrusted, and rightly so, by the Nuer against whom they lodged every kind of complaint.

648
181

The truculence and aloofness displayed by the Nuer is conformable to their culture, their social organization, and their character. The self-sufficiency and simplicity of their culture and the fixation of their interests on their herds explain why they neither wanted nor were willing to accept European innovations and why they rejected peace from which they had everything to lose. Their political structure depended for its form and persistence on balanced antagonisms that could only be expressed in warfare against their neighbours if the structure were to be maintained. Recognition of fighting as a cardinal value, pride in past achievements, and a deep sense of their common equality and their superiority to other peoples, made it impossible for them to accept willingly domination, which they had hitherto never experienced. Had more been known about them a different policy might have been instituted earlier and with less prejudice.[3]

[1] See, for example, Casati, op. cit., p. 221.

[2] For an account of conditions at this time see the *Sudan Intelligence Reports*, especially those by Kaimakam F. J. Maxse (no. 61, 1899), Capt. H. H. Wilson (no. 128, 1905), and O'Sullivan Bey (no. 187, 1910).

[3] For abusive references to the Nuer see Sir Samuel Baker, *The Albert N'Yanza*, 1913 (first published in 1866), pp. 39–42; Capt. H. H. Austin, *Among Swamps and Giants in Equatorial Africa*, 1902, p. 15; Count Gleichen, op. cit., 1905, vol. i, p. 133; C. W. L. Bulpett, *A Picnic Party in Wildest Africa*, 1907, pp. 22–3 and 35; Bimbashi Coningham, *Sudan Intelligence Report*, no. 192, 1910; H. Lincoln Tangye, *In the Torrid Sudan*, 1910, p. 222; E. S. Stevens, *My Sudan Year*, 1912, pp. 215 and 256–7; H. C. Jackson, op. cit., p. 60; *The Story of Fergie Bey. Told by himself and some of his Friends*, 1930, p. 113; and J. G. Millais, *Far away up the Nile*, 1924, pp. 174–5.

1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

•648 In 1920 large-scale military operations, including bombing and machine-gunning of camps, were conducted against the Eastern Jikany and caused much loss of life and destruction of property. There were further patrols from time to time, but the Nuer remained unsubdued. In 1927 the Nuong tribe killed their District Commissioner, while at the same time the Lou openly defied the Government and the Gaawar attacked Duk Faiyuil Police Post. From 1928 to 1930 prolonged operations were conducted against the whole of the disturbed area and marked the end of serious fighting between the Nuer and the Government. Conquest was a severe blow to the Nuer, who had for so long raided their neighbours with impunity and whose country had generally remained intact.

X

000 In our account of Nuer time-reckoning we noted that in one department of time their system of reckoning is, in a broad sense, a conceptualization, in terms of activities, or of physical changes that provide convenient points of reference for activities, of those phases of the oecological rhythm which have peculiar significance for them. We further noted that in another department of time it is a conceptualization of structural relations, time units being co-ordinate with units of structural space. We have given a brief description of these units of structural space in its political, or territorial, dimension and have drawn attention to the influence of oecology on distribution and hence on the values given to the distribution, the interrelation between which is the political system. This system is not, however, as simple as we have presented it, for values are not simple, and we now attempt to face some of the difficulties we have so far neglected. We start this attempt by asking what it is the Nuer mean when they speak of their *cieng*.

196 621 Values are embodied in words through which they influence behaviour. When a Nuer speaks of his *cieng*, his *dhor*, his *gol*, &c., he is conceptualizing his feelings of structural distance, identifying himself with a local community, and, by so doing, cutting himself off from other communities of the same kind. An examination of the word *cieng* will teach us one of the most fundamental characteristics of Nuer local groups and, indeed, of all social groups: their structural relativity.

1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

sacrifices to them by their prophets were believed to ensure booty and safety.

For the first time a single person symbolized, if only to a moderate degree and in a mainly spiritual and uninstitutionalized form, the unity of a tribe, for prophets are tribal figures. But they have a further significance, for their influence extended over tribal boundaries. Gwek had great influence in Gaajok, and it is said that because of it the Lou and the Gaajok for a time paid compensation for homicide between them. His influence reached as far as the Eastern Gaagwang and Gaajak. Dengleaka had a similar influence in the valley of the Zeraf, especially among the Thiang. Some of the Western Nuer prophets had a reputation among a number of neighbouring tribes which united for raids at the direction of their spirits. They were not a mechanism of tribal structure like leopard-skin chiefs, but were pivots of federation between adjacent tribes and personified the structural principle of opposition in its widest expression, the unity and homogeneity of Nuer against foreigners. Probably, the coalition of tribes and the organization of joint raids is very largely their achievement—though one cannot be sure of this in the absence of historical records—and has made them important and powerful figures in Nuerland. This interpretation explains how it is that prophets began half a century ago, or at any rate came to the fore then. Certain structural changes were taking place in response to changed conditions: the development of functions that were more purely political than any exercised by individuals before and of a greater degree of unity among neighbouring tribes than there had been hitherto. As Sky-gods passed at the death of prophets into their sons we are further justified in suggesting growth of hereditary political leadership which, with the strong tendency towards federation between adjacent tribes we attribute to the new Arab-European menace. Opposition between Nuer and their neighbours had always been sectional. They were now confronted by a more formidable and a common enemy. When the Government crushed the prophets this tendency was checked. As we understand the situation, the prophets were inevitably opposed to the Government because it was this opposition among the people which led to their emergence and was personified in them.

10:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931-1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

travellers are to be trusted, to have been much change of territory during the last fifty years. This eastwards migration is a fact that has to be taken into account, with those related earlier, if we wish to know why the eastern tribes are larger, territorially and numerically, than the western tribes, for it may be assumed that the struggle of conquest and settlement, and absorption of Dinka on an unprecedented scale, had some effect on the migrating hordes.

To the north, the Nuer are in varying degrees of contact with Arabs, the peoples of the Nuba Hills, the powerful Shilluk kingdom, and certain small communities in Darfung (Burun and Koma); while to the east and south-east they are bordered by the Galla of Ethiopia, the Anuak, and the Beir. Wherever the Nuer have direct relations with these peoples, they are hostile in character.

Arab slave-raiders from the Northern Sudan intruded here and there into the more accessible portions of Nuerland in the second half of the nineteenth century, but nowhere did they gain the upper hand or, indeed, make a marked impression on the Nuer, who opposed them as strongly as they resisted later the Egyptian Government, which undertook no serious operations against them. The Nuer likewise treated British rule with open disrespect till, as a result of lengthy military operations between 1928 and 1930, their opposition was broken and they were brought under effective administration. With the exception of this last episode in their history, the Nuer may be said to have reached in their foreign relations a state of equilibrium and of mutual hostility which was expressed from time to time in fighting.

A tribe is divided into territorial segments which regard themselves as separate communities. We refer to the divisions of a tribe as primary, secondary, and tertiary tribal sections. Primary sections are segments of a tribe, secondary sections are segments of a primary section, and tertiary sections are segments of a secondary section. A tertiary section is divided into villages and villages into domestic groups. A member of Z^3 tertiary division of tribe B sees himself as a member of Z^2 community in relation to Z^1, but he regards himself as a member of Y^2 and not of Z^2 in relation to Y^1. Likewise, he regards himself as a member of Y, and not of Y^2, in relation to X. He regards himself as a member of tribe B, and not of its primary section Y, in relation to tribe A. Thus, on a structural plane, there is always contradiction in the definition of a political group, for a man is a member of it in virtue

10:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931-1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

which gives them political unity and distinction is one of opposition. Between tribes, or federations of tribes, and foreign peoples this opposition is expressed, on the Nuer side at any rate, by contempt and persistent raiding, often carried out in a reckless and brutal manner. Between Nuer tribes, opposition is expressed by actual warfare or by acceptance that a dispute cannot, and ought not, to be settled in any other way. In intertribal warfare, however, women and children are neither speared nor enslaved. Between segments of the same tribe, opposition is expressed by the institution of the feud. A fight between persons of the same village or camp is as far as possible restricted to duelling with clubs. The hostility and mode of expression in these different relations varies in degree and in the form it takes.

Feuds frequently break out between sections of the same tribe and they are often of long duration. They are more difficult to settle the larger the sections involved. Within a village feuds are easily settled and within a tertiary tribal section they are concluded sooner or later, but when still larger groups are involved they may never be settled, especially if many persons on either side have been killed in a big fight.

A tribal section has most of the attributes of a tribe: name, sense of patriotism, a dominant lineage, territorial distinction, economic resources, and so forth. Each is a tribe in miniature, and they differ from tribes only in size, in degree of integration, and in that they unite for war and acknowledge a common principle of justice.

The strength of the sentiment associated with local groups is roughly relative to their size. Feeling of unity in a tribe is weaker than feeling of unity within its sections. The smaller the local group, the more the contacts its members have with one another and the more these contacts are co-operative and necessary for the maintenance of the life of the group. In a big group, like the tribe, contacts are infrequent, short, and of limited type. Also the smaller the group the closer and the more varied the relationships between its members, residential relations being only one strand in a network of agnatic, cognatic, and affinal relationships. Relationships by blood and marriage become fewer and more distant the wider the group.

It is evident that when we speak of a Nuer tribe we are using a relative term, for it is not always easy to say, on the criteria we have used, whether we are dealing with a tribe with two primary

12:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1930-1931) 1933
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

a single interpreter and without adequate grammar or dictionary[1] will fully understand the limitations which these conditions impose upon research. The Nuer would at any time have been a difficult job to tackle and the task was undoubtedly rendered more difficult by events of preceding years which had led to warfare with the Government and military control with consequent disillusionment and resentment. What work I was able to accomplish was made possible by the encouragement and assistance of Mr. A. G. Pawson, Governor of the Upper Nile Province, and Capts. A. H. A. Alban and H. A. Romilly and Mr. J. F. Tierney, and I wish to make special acknowledgment to the staff of the American Mission at Nasser who gave me hospitality and generously placed their time and knowledge at my disposal. Their co-operation was invaluable. I was mainly resident among the Lou Nuer to the east of the Nile, but I also visited the Lek Nuer on the Bahr-el-Ghazal and the Jekany who stretch westwards along the Sobat from the frontiers of Abyssinia. I have seen the Nuer of these regions during the dry season and the commencement of the rains but have not stayed among them during the rainy season. I was also restricted to a few cattle camps owing to lack of transport, so that spacially my acquaintance with the Nuer was confined to a very small area as temporally it was confined to a single

[1] At the time two long Nuer-English vocabularies existed, *A Nuer-English Vocabulary*, compiled by the late C. H. Stigand, Cambridge University Press, 1923, and *Nuer-English Dictionary*, by Ray Huffman, Dietrich Riemer, Berlin, 1929. Since my return from Nuerland Miss Huffman has published an English-Nuer vocabulary (*English-Nuer Dictionary*. Oxford University Press, 1931.) An earlier, but smaller, English-Nuer vocabulary has been compiled by Prof. Diedrich Westermann, and his account of Nuer phonetics and grammar are still all we possess on these subjects. It includes a number of native texts. ("The Nuer Language," by Diedrich Westermann. *Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen*. Berlin, 1912, pp. 84–141.) The oldest lists of words are those compiled by Brun-Rollet ("Vocabularien der Dinka-, Nuehr- und Schilluk-Sprachen." *Peterm. Mitt.*, 1862) and by Marno (Kleine Vocabularien der Fungi-, Tabi, Bertat-und Nuehr-Sprache." *Reisen im Gebeite des blauen und weissen Nil*. Wien, 1874.)

The following accounts of Nuer customs exist: Major C. H. Stigand, "Warrior Classes of the Nuers," *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. I, 1918, pp. 116–118. Major C. H. Stigand, "The Story of Kir and the White Spear," *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. II, 1919, pp. 224–236. Capt. V. H. Fergusson, "The Nuong Nuer," *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. IV, 1921, pp. 146–155). H. C. Jackson, "The Nuer of the Upper Nile Province," *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. VI, 1923, pp. 59–107 and 123–189. P. Coriat, "The Gaweir Nuer"—terminal essay in Jackson's combined account of *The Nuer of the Upper Nile Province* (his two papers in *Sudan Notes and Records*), El Hadara Printing Press, Khartoum, no date. Capt. V. H. Fergusson, "Nuer Beast Tales," *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. VII, 1924, pp. 105–112. Ray Huffman, *Nuer Customs and Folk-Lore*, Oxford University Press, 1931, pp. 105. Pater Crazzolara, "Die Gar-Zeremonie bei den Nuer," *Africa*, Vol. V., 1932, pp. 28–39. Miss Soule, *Some Nuer Terms in Relation to the Human Body*, Book I, Parts 1 and 2, the American Mission, Nasser, Sudan, October, 1931.

As far as I am aware this list, together with reports by a number of early travellers, completes the literature on the Nuer.

12:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1930-1931) 1933
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

of expansion and absorption has not been so extensive it has, nevertheless, been considerable. Both Nuer and Dinka myths recognise their common ancestry. It will soon be possible to see how closely their cultures approach one another to-day, but I reserve this comparison until the data is more abundant.

The Nuer have not been greatly affected by foreign influences owing to their geographical environment. Slight regional differences in environment exist, but their country is throughout hard on man and beast since it consists of an enormous plain which for the greater part of the year is either a parched desert or a swamp. These circumstances make the Nuer difficult to approach and their relations with the Government of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan have, on the whole, been broken and unsatisfactory and culminated a few years ago in open warfare on both banks of the Nile. Subsequently, a more deliberate policy and more systematic control were established for the whole area. At an early period the Nuer came into contact with Arabs, but, though this contact was closer in some parts of Nuerland than in others, I do not believe it anywhere deeply affected their culture.

Sketch map No. I shows the position of the Nuer in relation to the Shilluk and Dinka. The Nuer themselves speak of those tribes which inhabit the country to the west of the Bahr-el-Gebel as "homeland Nuer" (*Nath cieng*) and of those tribes which inhabit the country to the east of the Bahr-el-Gebel as "bush Nuer" (*Nath doar*), and it is convenient to make this distinction also by speaking of these two divisions as Western Nuer and Eastern Nuer respectively.

II.

Nuerland is divided into a number of territorial sections, the occupants of which form political units of the Nuer nation. These territorial sections I will call countries and the political units which occupy them I will call tribes. Thus, the Lou country is a territorial division of Nuerland and the Lou tribe is a political division of the Nuer nation. These tribes are shown on the accompanying sketch map No. II.

The published estimates of population of Nuer tribes will give some idea of their numerical importance.

12:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1930-1931) 1933
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

619 621 682 628 [581] [614] and Gaawär or between Lou and Gaajok. In Gaajok country I was also repeatedly informed that there was *cut* between all Gaajok tribesmen, but no *cut* between them and Gaagwang or Gaajak tribesmen. It is true that tribes are not water-tight compartments. People moved all over Nuerland with remarkable freedom and there are strong social bonds uniting people with members of tribes other than their own, particularly the bonds of marriage (there has always been interchange of daughters between Lou and Gaajok, for instance) and the bonds of clanship (the dominant elements in Gaajok and Gaajak tribes, for example, belong to the same clan since they are all descended from the same ancestor, Kir. Also lineages of the same clan are scattered far and wide among a dozen different tribes, but still recognise their kinship in spite of their territorial disintegration). Nevertheless, the declarations of Nuer on this point must have some significance, and I consider it well to record my own impressions from their verbal statements, together with Mr. Coriat's criticism. The point is important, but not overwhelmingly so. What is of greater significance is that each tribe has its own tribal officials who regulate disputes among tribesmen in so far as their ritual functions allow them to do so. The Lou leopard-skin chiefs regulate disputes among Lou tribesmen and Gaajok leopard-skin chiefs regulate disputes among Gaajok tribesmen. In virtue of his sacred character a leopard-skin chief (or land expert) can perform his ritual functions irrespective of tribal boundaries, but in the nature of things one does not summon a leopard-skin chief from Gaajok country to function in Lou country, but each district of Lou country has its regular experts who perform whatever services are required of them by fellow tribesmen of their section.

619 624

619 721 648 (4) Tribesmen unite for defensive and offensive warfare against other tribes and segments of other nations. Messengers summoned Lou tribesmen from all over the tribal area for a combined raid on the Dinka and those who wished to take part in the raid answered the summons. In such expeditions there [redacted] truce to disputes within the tribe itself and temporary tribal solidarity was attained. Mr. Coriat points out to me, with some justice, that "it is incorrect to state that the tribe is the largest political unit within the nation. Their history can show many instances where two or more tribes have combined in common offence and defence. As an example, Lou and Jekany against the Anuak,

12:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1930-1931) 1933
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

619 Garweir and Lou against the Dinka. In fact, the tribes combined in
721 their first conquests of the Dinka." I was aware of these combinations,
●648 but I preferred to regard them as alliances between two political units. In the same way in Europe, nations, the largest political units of our culture, combine together for purposes of warfare, but they do not lose their political autonomy by doing so. The comparison goes no further. Here again I wish to make it clear that I do not regard Nuer tribes as cohesive, clearly defined, water-tight, political groups. They are surely not. There are constant feuds between segments of the same tribe; there is constant marriage, fraternisation, and recognition of common kinship, between members of different tribes. Moreover, the tribe, as is explained more fully later, comprises within its boundaries a number of fairly cohesive segments cut off from each other territorially and these segments are united to one another by slender links which frequently snap so that new tribes are formed by fission. When tribes allied for warfare, each organised itself separately, so far as I could gather. Thus, when Lou united with Gaajok and Gaajak each organised its fighting force under its own leaders and magicians.

619 In my opinion, the Nuer tribes may be said to have had these political functions even if they carried them out very inadequately, and it is in this belief that I have spoken of the Lou as a tribe which includes two primary sections, the Gun and the Mor, but I have classed the eastern Gaajok, Gaajak, and Gaagwang as three separate tribes rather than as three sections of a Jekany tribe. I admit that the Nuer tribes did not carry out their functions in the clear-cut manner which we find among the tribes of many other African nations, e.g., the Azande. The Nuer tribe is a very fluid affair. It is not a constant and static group, but it is variable and dynamic. The way in which it has segmented is sufficient evidence of this. Fission takes place as a result of slow but continual social changes, the tendency being always that as the tribe gets larger it loses solidarity accordingly, so that it is not always possible to say with certainty when a tribe, in the sense in which I have used the term, is a single tribe with two moieties or whether it would not be more correct to speak of two separate tribes. I do not want to be guilty of the despicable offence of word-polishing. Those who wish to speak of the Gun and Mor moieties of the Lou tribe as two tribes or of the Gaajok and Gaajak tribes as two primary sections of one Jekany tribe are free to do so.

12:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1930-1931) 1933
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

Nuer lineages belongs more to a study of kinship than to the plan of the present paper. Its importance may be gauged by the fact that probably some 75 per cent. of the Lou tribe are of Dinka descent, belonging either to families sprung from a man who has been *lath-buthni*, given relationship, in a Nuer lineage, or to the families which have retained their full status as independent Dinka lineages.

This is the second type of Dinka domiciled among the Nuer to whom I made reference earlier. In the old days, and still to-day, Dinka frequently came to live among Nuer of their own accord and were always well received and allowed to settle and become members of the village community. There are a number of reasons which may have influenced a Dinka in taking this step. Along the Nuer-Dinka border intermarriage was frequent and Dinka would come to live near their married sisters and perhaps settle there and bring up a family who are Nuer in everything but descent. In the same way if a Nuer captured a Dinka girl and brought her up and gave her in marriage he might expect a visit from her brother, who would perhaps settle in his sister's village, in which case his brother-in-law would certainly give him one or two cows to start a herd. Many Dinka families came into Lou country to escape hunger and the other attendant miseries to which they had been reduced by constant Nuer raiding which left them cattleless.[1] Moreover there must have been a very large element of the original Dinka owners of country to the east of the Nile absorbed into the social system of their Nuer conquerors. They cannot all have been dispersed, and the probability is that what happened during the Nuer invasions was similar to what was happening along the Nuer-Dinka border right up to the present day when raiding and intermarriage occupied long lulls between waves of fresh invasion.

[1] I was told that it sometimes happened that a poor Dinka would come and live with a rich Nuer and would help to herd his cattle and cultivate his gardens so that the Nuer, being gratified, would give him a blind or lame daughter whom no one wanted to marry. This is apparently considered a proper marriage, since the Dinka presents his wife with a skirt (*yel*). My informants said that, of course, no one would give a nice girl to a Dinka in this way.

(To be continued.)